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ABSTRACT

This document presents a description and preliminary evaluation of a pilot project involving Gorham State College and the Poland Spring Job Corps Center for Women in a cooperative program designed to enlarge student teacher opportunities for working with disadvantaged students and to explore potentialities of Job Corps trainees in higher education. Developed by staffs of both the college and the center, the program enables student teachers to be placed at the Job Corps Center for an 8-week period, during which time they teach English, mathematics and general science to both individuals and groups, while receiving guidance from experienced Center personnel. In turn, selected Job Corps women are enrolled in freshman courses at the College and, under the provisions of a carefully planned advisor-advisee program, are offered assistance in making the transition from Center to College environment. Resources, staffs, and services of both institutions are shared, as are the minimal costs of the program. Preliminary evaluations indicate that the cooperative project is proving of mutual benefit to both the institutions and their students. (Author/JS)

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TEACHER EDUCATION

AND JOB CORPS COOPERATIVE PROJECT

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PART I

SUMMARY

Colleges have the responsibility of leadership in creating innovations for the improvement of teacher education. Realizing that a cooperative endeavor between state and federally supported educational institutions could have mutual benefits, a pilot project was initiated by Gorham State College and the Job Corps Center for Women. The project was designed to enlarge student teacher opportunities for working with disadvantaged students and to explore potentialities of Federal Job Corps trainees in higher education.

Planning and development were a joint enterprise involving the staffs of both the College and the Center. Student teachers are placed, first, in a public school for an eight-week period and then at the Job Corps Center for the second eight-weeks. Selected Job Corps women are enrolled in freshman courses at the College. Resources and services of both institutions are being shared. Campus activities include seminars, convocations and discussion groups; Center activities include seminars and tutorial programs.

Personnel involved in the project are the faculty, administrators, and staff of the College and Center. Costs, which are minimal, are subsidized by the two institutions.

Evaluation is continuous. Despite the limited duration of operation, immediate assessments of progress are evident. Student teachers are not only meeting challenges enthusiastically; they are gaining incalcuable experience in dealing, early in their careers, with disadvantaged youth.

Members of the college faculty are helping to develop curriculum changes at the Center. Most satisfying of all perhaps, is the spectacle of Job Corps Women successfully undertaking college-level courses.

PART II

TEACHER EDUCATION AND JOB CORPS COOPERATIVE PROJECT

I. Description and Development of the Program

In the winter of 1964 the Education Department at Gorham State College began a series of evening seminars intended to stimulate thinking and encourage innovations in professional and academic preparation of teachers. Seminar discussion leaders consisted of faculty members and administrators from colleges and universities within the state, several influential Gorham graduates, the Director of Learning from the Poland Spring Job Corps Center, Sir Ronald Gould, President of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, and a practicing psychiatrist. Guests invited to participate in the discussions have been representatives from the Gorham faculty and college administrators, educators from Maine colleges and high schools, and local community leaders. In the fall of 1965 these seminars resulted in recommendations for the improvement of the total program at Gorham State College, such as, independent study for students, substantial curriculum revision, and closed circuit television between the laboratory school and the campus. The most recent and far-reaching innovation, however, involves a cooperative project between the College and the Job Corps Center in nearby Poland Spring, Maine.

Early in the summer of 1966 a pilot project was established by reciprocal agreement between the Job Corps Center and Gorham State College whereby student teachers from the College would receive training at the Center in teaching disadvantaged women, and a selected group of Center women would be admitted as freshmen to the College. The initial planning committee consisted of instructors and officers from both institutions.

Frequent conferences were held during the summer to formulate objectives, to identify a plan of procedure, and to structure the development. As an outgrowth of these, the committee identified definite objectives:

1. To provide opportunities for culturally disadvantaged women in the Job Corps to secure a college education.
2. To extend educational opportunities beyond those available at the Job Corps Center.
3. To enrich the experiences of student teachers through teaching disadvantaged youth.
4. To utilize the talents of the faculty and staff at both institutions for their mutual professional benefit.
5. To establish faculty communications between the two institutions.

These plans culminated in enrolling seven Poland Spring Job Corps Women as fall semester freshmen at Gorham State College. These seven students were selected from a total of thirty-five candidates. Job Corps and Gorham personnel evaluated each candidate on the basis of the following criteria: (1) a review of secondary school transcripts, (2) an examination of standardized tests administered by the Job Corps Center, (3) personal interviews with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs and the Director of Admissions of Gorham State College, and (4) recommendations of the faculty and staff at Poland Spring. In addition, each prospective student had to possess a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate. This academic requirement opens up the possibility of an increased number of candidates in the ensuing semesters.

The students are currently enrolled for credit in these regular freshman courses: English Composition, History of Civilization, College Health

and American School. Several are auditing Physical Science and Elements of Mathematics.

A carefully planned adviser-advisee program has been developed to aid the women in making the transition from the Center to the College environment. Interested undergraduates have provided regularly scheduled assistance to students on matters of college and community life. The Director of Upward Bound at Gorham is serving in the capacity of academic adviser, meeting with these women on a weekly basis to offer encouragement, to evaluate individual progress, and to provide continued guidance.

The project involves, furthermore, a reciprocal arrangement whereby four Gorham seniors are assigned to the Job Corps Center for one quarter of their regular student-teaching semester. They are teaching English, Mathematics and General Science to both individuals and groups. These Gorham student teachers were jointly selected by the College and the Center on the basis of

1. Interest in the program
2. Proficiency in major field of study
3. Adaptability to an atypical classroom situation
4. Enthusiasm for working with culturally disadvantaged people
5. Understanding of human growth and development
6. Reactions following visits to the Center

Recommendations of Gorham faculty and evaluations of personal interviews were required.

Members of the committee at the Job Corps Center selected four supervising teachers. Criteria considered were: interest in supervision,

educational background and teaching experience, and desire to participate in the student teaching program.

A member of the Education Department at Gorham has been appointed to serve as liaison officer. In his coordination of the program an early responsibility was the orientation of the supervising teachers.

School officials from Poland Spring directly responsible for the project are as follows: the Director of Learning, the Assistant Director of Learning, and the Director of the Enrichment Program; from Gorham: the Upward Bound Director, Director of Student Teaching, and College Coordinator. Other personnel cooperating in the project are the President, Director of Admissions, Dean of Women, Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of Placement, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs of Gorham, and selected faculty members from both institutions.

Budgetary fees were established in a signed agreement: "Gorham State College agrees to accept up to ten qualified young women from the Job Corps Center at Poland Spring for the fall semester, 1966-67. They will be subject to the out-of-state tuition rate of $100.00 per semester unless they are residents of Maine. In the latter case the amount of tuition will be $50.00 per semester. The Job Corps will provide the college with a limited number of student teaching situations; wherever the college uses such situations the tuition of students from the Job Corps will be adjusted at the rate of $50.00 per student teacher per quarter." Tuition costs are paid by the Job Corps, not by the individuals concerned.

II. Contributions to the Improvement of Teacher Education

Teaching at the Center provides opportunities for student teachers to broaden their horizons and develop new insights. Each selected senior participates in two widely contrasting learning situations--first an eight-week period in a public school, followed by an eight-week period at the Job Corps Center. Seniors return to the college for a seminar each Friday to share their experiences with other student teachers. The evidence is conclusive that the Gorham seniors in the project have developed a greater perception and versatility in the use of teaching techniques and resources.

The sharing of College and Center services is mutually beneficial. Gorham faculty members are contributing leadership in the revision of the social studies curriculum at the Center. The Job Corps Women have actively participated in a sociology seminar in which they freely exchanged viewpoints, both personal and objective, with the class. "The cultural shock" of such an experience is indispensable to the growth of both underprivileged Job Corps Women and the comfortably middle class students. Job Corps personnel who have served as guest speakers at a college convocation and a college seminar are challenging the goals, attitudes and aspirations of future teachers. They have alerted students to the satisfaction of teaching careers among the underprivileged.

Authorities at both institutions believe that a qualified young woman in the Job Corps who may never have aspired to higher education, can ultimately earn a teaching degree and become a contributing member of society. Even though the Job Corps program terminates for the trainees at the end of two years, the college experience will serve to stimulate professional education.

III. Evaluation

A pilot program by its very nature is experimental. The cooperative project between Gorham State College and the Job Corps Center for Women has been in operation for a limited time; however, a few assessments concerning progress of the Women are evident. Several of the Women found that they could not continue with a six-course program and have focused their energies by dropping the two audit courses. By concentrating on fewer classes, they are, according to weekly reports of instructors, maintaining average or above average grades. Since these participants sometimes lack study skills, a tutorial program for improving this deficiency has been initiated. Job Corps Women, at the College, are receiving invitations to take part in activities such as the Student Education Association of Maine, the Drama Club, and student publications.

As it completes its first experimental quarter, the cooperative project between Gorham State College and the Job Corps Center provides certain clear implications. Gorham student teachers are enthusiastic about their experiences at the Center and are meeting the challenges inherent in teaching disadvantaged youth.

At present, benefits to both the College and the Center are gratifying but long-range evaluations are necessary to determine whether or not the objectives of this project will be accomplished.

Quality supervision doesn't merely happen. It is planned. It emerges from a quality educational program which provides for continuous growth and improvement.*

* Association for Student Teaching, The Supervising Teacher, Thirty-eighth Yearbook, Association for Student Teaching, Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1958, p. 101.